

PERSPECTIVES ON THE GTA

A PUBLICATION OF THE OFFICE FOR THE GREATER TORONTO AREA

SHAPING GROWTH IN THE GTA

From consensus to action

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YORK CITY CENTRE

A model partnership

STARPHONE COMMENTS

New technology provides forum for public input



MINISTER'S LETTER

Ruth Grier, Minister responsible for the OGTA



With the publication of the six working group reports and the commentary document, "Shaping Growth in the GTA," we have moved another step forward in the preparation of a Strategic Action Plan for the GTA.

The completion of the working group reports is the result of tremendous effort by a host of people. From February

to April of this year, 110 public servants from municipalities and provincial ministries lent their expertise in a wonderful spirit of co-operation to produce these reports. I would like to thank all of the people involved in this process for their hard work and dedication.

When this government took office in 1990, the Office for the Greater Toronto Area was concerned primarily with planning the future infrastructure needs of the GTA. We believed that, if we were to meet the demands of this rapidly growing part of the province, it was necessary to extend the planning process in an effort to manage future growth in a way that reflects our commitment to social justice and the need for an ecosystem approach.

With the publication of the six working group reports and *Shaping Growth in the GTA*, we are at the next stage of this process. These documents make the plans more concrete, but there is still more work to be done to develop a strategic action plan.

The next phase must be broad public consultation based on these reports. Over the next two months there will be meetings in each of the regions to discuss the studies. We are interested in hearing the views of special interest groups, community organizations, municipalities and individuals. We feel that it is only after public input that we will be able to tailor plans that meet the needs of the people within the GTA.

I personally am very encouraged by all that we have accomplished and hold our great hope that this process will lead to a Strategic Action Plan that is a true consensus of the views of the widest number of people. It has been a great challenge, but judging from the work that has been done, I feel that we have travelled a great distance towards realizing our goal of maintaining and enhancing the quality of life for all residents of the GTA.

Ruth Grier,
Minister responsible for the
Office for the Greater Toronto Area

EDITOR'S MESSAGE

Perspectives on the GTA is directed to people who are interested in helping the OGTA develop an action plan to manage the future growth of the Greater Toronto Area.

This newsletter discusses how we can better plan for the social, environmental and economic well-being of the GTA and how you can play a role in helping us meet these challenges. This second issue concentrates in particular on the

consultation process and highlights the various ways the OGTA is consulting people about issues affecting the area.

If you are not already on our mailing list and would like to receive future issues of the newsletter, please complete the form on the back page.

Mike Toombs, Editor, *Perspectives on the GTA*



THE GTA

The Greater Toronto Area

Almost four million people, 40 per cent of the population of Ontario, live in what is commonly called the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). This area is composed of 35 area municipalities including Metropolitan Toronto and four regional municipalities – Halton, Peel, York and Durham.

The Office for the Greater Toronto Area is responsible for co-ordinating the Provincial Government's policies, programs and projects designed to ensure that the Greater Toronto Area remains environmentally and economically attractive as it manages growth.

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SHAPING GROWTH IN THE GTA

From consensus to action

Clarity, innovation and bold moves are required to come to terms with change in the GTA if we are going to maintain a high quality of life for all, according to "Shaping Growth in the GTA" – a summary and commentary on the six provincial/municipal working groups that studied critical issues having an impact on the area. The areas of study were: Urban Form, Countryside, Human Services, Economic Vitality, Infrastructure and Investment Planning and Mechanisms.

The report was commissioned by the Greater Toronto Co-ordinating Committee (GTCC) to highlight the relationships between the findings of each working group and to isolate major issues that required further discussion. The report was prepared under the direction of Ken Greenberg, a principal of the urban planning and design firm Berridge Lewinberg Greenberg.

Shaping Growth summarizes the analysis of the working groups which were composed of provincial and municipal staff and staff from various government agencies. It reviews and comments on the reports and is the most recent contribution as the municipalities and the province move towards a Strategic Action Plan for managing growth in the GTA over the next 30 years.

A general consensus has emerged in a series of earlier studies that future development in the GTA should take into account the critical interaction between the natural and cultural environment, transportation, open space and all human activities in the GTA.

The 1989 Greater Toronto Area Urban Structure Concepts Study determined there was an essential need to clarify the definition of nodes and the amount of growth that would be permitted around existing urban areas.

Three other studies – the Crombie Royal Commission, the Provincial Kanter Report and a third provincial study now underway by the Sewell Commission – reflect and have contributed to the growing emphasis on environmental protection and have had a powerful impact on deliberations concerning the GTA's future.

Building on these studies, and the response of municipalities to them, the Province released several reports which proposed a new vision for the future of the GTA. The emerging consensus was captured in *Growing Together and GTA 2021: The Challenge of our Future – A Working Document*.

GTA 2021: *The Challenge of Our Future* envisages a GTA based on defined, compact communities where a variety of employment opportunities and a wide range of housing choices – close to pedestrian-accessible services and amenities – would assist in building social equity for people of different ages, economic means and with different personal priorities and social service needs.

This working document concluded that a detailed review of a number of issues needed to be done as a basis for a comprehensive strategy. The working group reports are a first attempt to address these substantive issues.

Shaping Growth in the GTA concludes there is significant agreement among the working groups, especially in support for compact urban form, multi-centered urban structures, protecting countryside, maximizing the use of existing infrastructure and developing a transit-oriented transportation system.

These converging ideas arise out of a common concern for the changes underway in the pattern of growth in the GTA, which is more socially, politically and physically diverse and complex than ever before.

The GTA's position, as the financial centre and economic engine of Canada, has made it attractive to other Canadians and new immigrants alike. Our population has grown by 24%, to 4.2 million since 1981, and three-quarters of that growth has been concentrated in the regional municipalities. Current projections predict that the area's population will swell to six million by the year 2021.

Shaping Growth in the GTA says the pattern of post-war growth has been low density development with large expanses of land devoted to single uses like residential areas, business and industrial parks or shopping malls. A vast network of highways and roadways traverses the GTA, testimony to both post Second World War economic development and the automobile as the preferred form of personal transportation.

health services. The emphasis is placed on the most efficient use of both hard infrastructure – water and sewer systems, roadways and public transit services – and soft infrastructure – health, education and social services.

Shaping Growth in the GTA points to the key relationship between urban form and the transit system in particular. Land uses and transit must be planned together to promote efficiency, economy and social goals.

While the existing policy structure, including Official Plans and zoning, provides a valuable starting point, there is a need to develop implementation mechanisms to achieve the GTA's growth management objectives.

These mechanisms should:

- be accountable, preserve the power of local governments and not add a new layer of government;
- clearly establish the roles of the province, regions, local municipalities and other government agencies;
- permit consensus and co-operation; and
- ensure there is only enough intervention/administration to achieve the desired results.

Shaping Growth goes a step further by pointing to a number of instruments which will help to implement changes, including:

Improved inter-jurisdiction co-ordination – Each report identified the need to co-ordinate such areas as delivery of large scale services, planning and developing infrastructure, inter-regional transit and capital expenditure prioritization.

Urban Form and Development Control – Municipal governments already have the framework for development control in Official Plans and zoning. However, some form of GTA overview may also be required, including a common commitment to definitive and realistic urban, rural and greenland boundaries.

Capital Needs Identification – All the reports pointed out that the new expenditures needed exceed the money available in the short term. This highlights the need for new methods of prioritizing capital spending and ensuring these expenditures achieve public goals.

Pricing Mechanisms – Many reports recommend new approaches to pricing municipal services such as water supply and sewage treatment. They include such concepts as user pay practices and attaching value to things outside of the direct pricing mechanism.

Municipal Taxation – This is an important lever for municipalities and must support compact urban form. Present industrial and commercial property taxes in inner areas are high compared to those in peripheral areas.

The common themes in the working group reports provide broad outlines for a new approach to growth management. They will be captured in a Strategic Action Plan for the GTA, an approach that is efficient, integrated, flexible and balanced, is based on shared values and common vision, and can be implemented in a co-ordinated manner and in a spirit of co-operation and commitment.

The first three components of the Strategic Action Plan will be a revised Population and Employment Forecast, a GTA Urban Form Policy and a Capital Project Requirements Plan.

(See: GTA/employment and population studies in this issue, Page 3)



YORK CITY CENTRE

A model partnership



A new city centre for the City of York will soon be underway on the southwest corner of Eglinton Ave. West and Black Creek Drive – thanks to a partnership of the Provincial Government, the City of York and Dumea Real Estate of North America (DRENA).

The 11.7 acre project – phase one of a future 230 acre city centre – was announced on April 28th by Premier Bob Rae, the Honourable Ruth Grier, the Honourable Gilles Pouliot, York Mayor Fergy Brown, Metro Chair Alan Tonks, and Didier Raspo, Chair and CEO of DRENA.

The partners signed a memorandum of understanding to rationalize land ownership of the 11.7 acres. When completed, the development will incorporate a transportation gateway which will significantly improve transit accessibility in York (including a GO platform, a surface bus station and a Kiss and Ride facility, and when fully developed, a link with a more comprehensive transit system along Eglinton Ave.), 850 affordable and

market-priced residential units, and more than one million square feet of office and retail space. Under the terms of the agreement, the City of York also has a three-year option to acquire lands on the southeast corner for a new civic centre and/or recreational centre.

The project represents a total private and public investment of \$400 million and is DRENA's first project in the North American real estate market. Construction is expected to create the equivalent of one year's employment for approximately 6,600 people in construction and related industries. Development will be staged over the next 15 to 20 years, commencing with the Province's gateway and a component of DRENA's residential units.

The Office for the Greater Toronto Area (OGTA) became involved in making this project a reality at the invitation of the other partners. The OGTA's role was to assist in achieving a satisfactory conclusion to the negotiations and to ensure that some important public objectives are met by the development, specifically that:

- the development is consistent with the objective of achieving compact urban form, and encourages the kind of densities that make better public transit viable;
- the centre creates a community focus for work, shopping, recreation and cultural activities, and in general encourages a better live/work relationship;
- the development provides the City of York with a core area to implement its city centre concept;
- the centre includes office and retail space for 4,000 workers; and
- the Province is provided with an eight month right of first opportunity to identify a public use for a 1.8 acre parcel of land within the development.

The development is strongly supported by the community, in large measure because of the extensive consultation in York and the valuable contribution of the city centre public working group.

When completed, the city centre will provide a new community focus for the municipality. At the same time, it is a model for the principles of urban growth in the GTA outlined in the Province's working document, *GTA 2021: The Challenge of Our Future*. And, perhaps most important of all, it is evidence of a successful private/public sector partnership for the public good.

GTA/EMPLOYMENT AND POPULATION STUDIES

An important step in developing the GTA Strategic Action Plan is to revisit the area's employment and population projections and adjust them in light of the 1991 census results and the changes to federal immigration policy.

In 1988/89 a sub-committee of the Greater Toronto Co-ordinating Committee (GTCC), chaired by the Office for the Greater Toronto Area (OGTA), reached an agreement on population, household and employment forecasts for the GTA to the year 2021. These forecasts anticipate that there will be six million residents living within the GTA in the next 25 to 30 years.

The committee reached agreement on the projections on the basis of historical trends. They also reached agreement on the share of growth that would occur in each of the

regions. Although birth rates have remained relatively stable, changes in Canada's federal immigration policy and the new information available as a result of the 1992 census require verification of the original projections. The distribution of this population will also be re-examined in the light of the agreement that future development should be in a concentrated nodal form.

In order to verify both the information and the distribution of population, the original committee will be reconvened. This committee will include representatives from the four regions and Metropolitan Toronto, as well as the Provincial Ministries of Treasury and Economics, Transportation and Municipal Affairs and will be chaired by the OGTA. The committee is expected to begin its work in September and will likely report its findings early in 1993.

The committee will identify population, households and employment growth projections and determine for the first time the spatial needs for accommodating them within the GTA. The distribution of the growth projections will be renewed within the context of the principles outlined in the OGTA working document: *GTA 2021: The Challenge of Our Future*.

The committee's job will be to provide the data necessary for planning purposes. The GTA must have the numbers – the underpinnings – to begin defining how and where the projected growth can be accommodated. The data is necessary to determine the infrastructure and services needed to provide residents with a good quality of life in the future. Without these numbers it is difficult to do effective planning.

WORKSHOPS PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THE FUTURE OF THE GTA

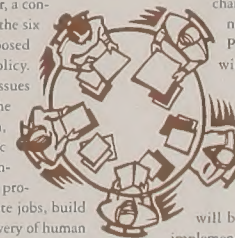
The provincial and municipal governments have been working together to come up with ways that the Greater Toronto Area can adequately provide for the additional two million people expected to be living in the area by the year 2021. Before decisions can be made that will affect the four million people already living in the GTA, the provincial and municipal governments have been consulting extensively with residents and interest and community groups – the people affected most by change.

As part of this ongoing consultation, five full-day workshops will be held from mid-October to early November in the GTA's four regional municipalities: Durham, Halton, York, and Peel and Metropolitan Toronto. Invitations are now being distributed from the regions hosting the event.

The purpose of the workshops is to review the working document *GTA 2021: The Challenge of Our Future*, the reports of six joint provincial/municipal working groups, and *Shaping Growth in the GTA* – the latter, a consolidated position paper on the reports of the six working groups and to discuss the proposed components of the GTA Urban Form Policy. All of these documents address specific issues that will have a significant impact on the future of the GTA, including urban form, the countryside, human services, economic vitality, infrastructure and investment planning and mechanisms. And they identify proposed areas for change – how we can create jobs, build housing, roads and subways, improve delivery of human services and ensure open spaces are preserved.

"The workshops are designed so that participants, such as municipal councillors and staff within the GTA, can review the documents in the morning, then comment on proposed changes during break-out sessions in the afternoon," says Peter Allan, Commissioner of Planning for the Region of Peel. "Attendees will have a chance, first-hand, to play a significant role in planning for the future of the GTA."

The workshops are an important step in the consultation process. The information gathered will be used in developing the Strategic Action Plan, which will be the key to overcoming challenges and implementing change in the GTA.



THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

From Fall 1991

FALL 1991

Six Working Groups Established

Studied urban form, countryside, human services, economic vitality, infrastructure and investment planning and mechanisms

Joint provincial/municipal staff groups and representatives from some non-governmental organizations

Asked to provide background and recommend actions

SEPTEMBER 1992

Shaping Growth in the GTA and Working Group Reports Released

Shaping growth is a report commissioned by the Greater Toronto Co-ordinating Committee to highlight the relationships between the findings of each working group and to isolate major issues that require further discussion

MARCH 1992

GTA 2021: The Challenge of our Future Working Document

Working Document published outlining a "Vision" for the GTA in 2021 based on a clear set of values

Document starts the process to establish a Strategic Action Plan and encompass public input

FALL 1992

Classroom Workshops with Students

Meetings with high school students to discuss their expectations for the GTA

Pilot project with Durham Board of Education held Spring 1992

SPRING 1992

StarPhone (The Toronto Star)

Taped messages on economic vitality, supportive communities, transportation, a sustainable region and greenlands soliciting comments from the public

FALL 1992

Regional Workshops

Refines and builds commitment towards a draft Strategic Action Plan

SUMMER/FALL 1992

Consultation with Community Based Organizations

Meetings with neighbourhood associations, community service organizations, business groups, environmental groups, professional associations, and community heritage groups

WINTER 1992/1993

Community Meetings

Refines and builds commitment towards a draft Strategic Action Plan

10 SEPT '92

STARPHONE COMMENTS HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE OF THE GREATER TORONTO AREA

The Office for the Greater Toronto Area (OGTA) has been using The Toronto Star's Starphone as an innovative means of informing residents of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) about issues affecting them and seeking their comments.

"During an initial run of about five weeks, our Starphone messages sparked interest from more than 3,000 callers," says Elizabeth McLaren, Assistant Deputy Minister for the OGTA. "We received a wide range of comments on our messages about transportation problems in the GTA, the economic vitality of our region, the health of our greenlands, and the benefits of building supportive and sustainable communities."

This column will feature the OGTA's responses to some of the callers' comments.

COMMENT:

"I think the Office for the Greater Toronto Area should encourage people to use public transit. However, since overcrowding on buses and subways makes driving more attractive, you should lower rates and make transit more accessible to lure riders. We can't keep moving things farther and farther away from Metro, because this causes congestion and increased pollution. When things are closer, people are more apt to use transit, or better yet, their bicycles."

RESPONSE:

The OGTA is always open to innovative solutions to the issues we face. As this caller suggests, we can't keep moving things further and further away. Too many people in the GTA already live far away from where they work and spend their leisure time. People have come to depend on cars to get around. And our road and highway systems are inadequate to handle even current volumes of traffic. The answer to our transportation problem, however, is not more highways. More cars means increased vehicular emissions so that today, automobiles are now the largest source of locally produced air

pollution. An expanded and enlarged transit system is the only recourse for the GTA. We simply can't afford to repeat planning procedures that encourage urban sprawl and use up prime agricultural land.

COMMENT:

"I'm in full support of spending money on parks and recreation and creating new greenlands, especially now that there is more building going on in areas north of Toronto," says one environmentally-concerned caller. "I think Toronto has set the pace for a lot of North American cities inasmuch as we've always set aside certain areas for parkland."

RESPONSE:

The OGTA wholeheartedly agrees that greenlands should be protected, maintained and enhanced. Greenlands improve our quality of life. They help maintain healthy air, water, soil, plant and animal life. And they simply make life in the Greater Toronto Area more enjoyable.

You are right in saying that we must continue to preserve our greenlands. We know that new developments can use up prime agricultural land and energy resources, put pressure on water and sewer systems and threaten natural wildlife environments. The OGTA has established a working group to evaluate the issue of green spaces and, as part of its recommendations to be presented in early Fall, the group has formulated some proposals for protecting greenlands, as well as a mechanism for evaluating the health of the natural environment in order to sustain and improve its existence.

The OGTA is carefully reviewing all Starphone responses and will use the feedback, along with information gathered through other consulting methods, to create a Strategic Action Plan that will outline the steps needed to be taken in order to create a GTA which respects the natural environment, contributes to a strong provincial economy and provides a superior quality of life for residents.

COMMENT CARD

I wish to get involved in planning the future of the Greater Toronto Area by:

- receiving the newsletter - Perspectives on the GTA, (if you are already on the mailing list, there is no need to send in the order form again);
- receiving a copy of the GTA 2021: The Challenge of Our Future, A Working Document;
- receiving a copy of Shaping Growth in the GTA; and
- inviting an OGTA representative to speak to my group about the future of the Greater Toronto Area.

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